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Welcome to Tacoma, Mr. Florida. Have a Beer.

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WELCOME TO TACOMA, MR. FLORIDA.

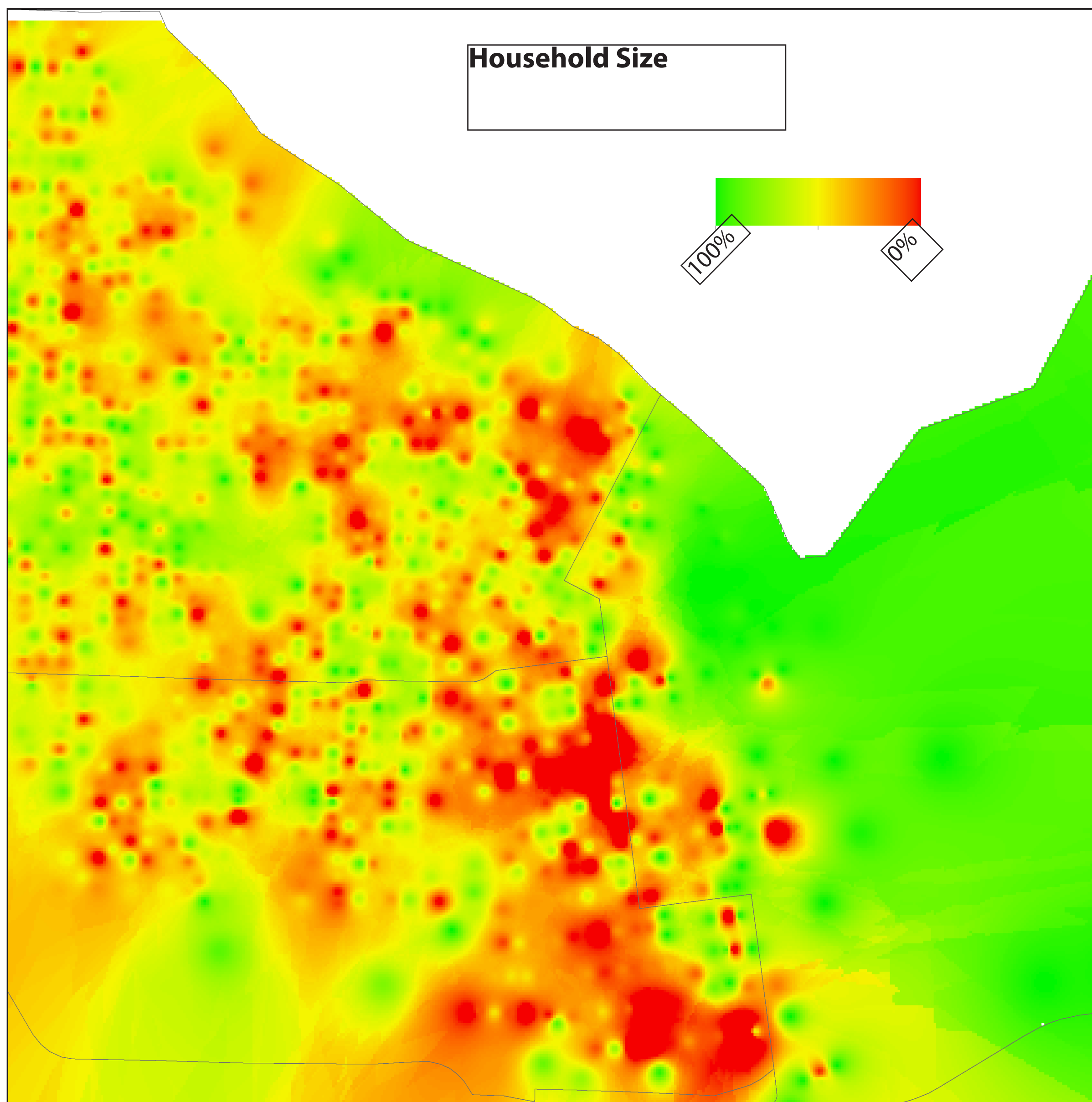
HAVE A BEER.

Cities across the country are seeking innovative and successful economic development theories that can prescribe policies that effectively attract affluent and stable residents. For the last decade cities have sought out the advice of Richard Florida for

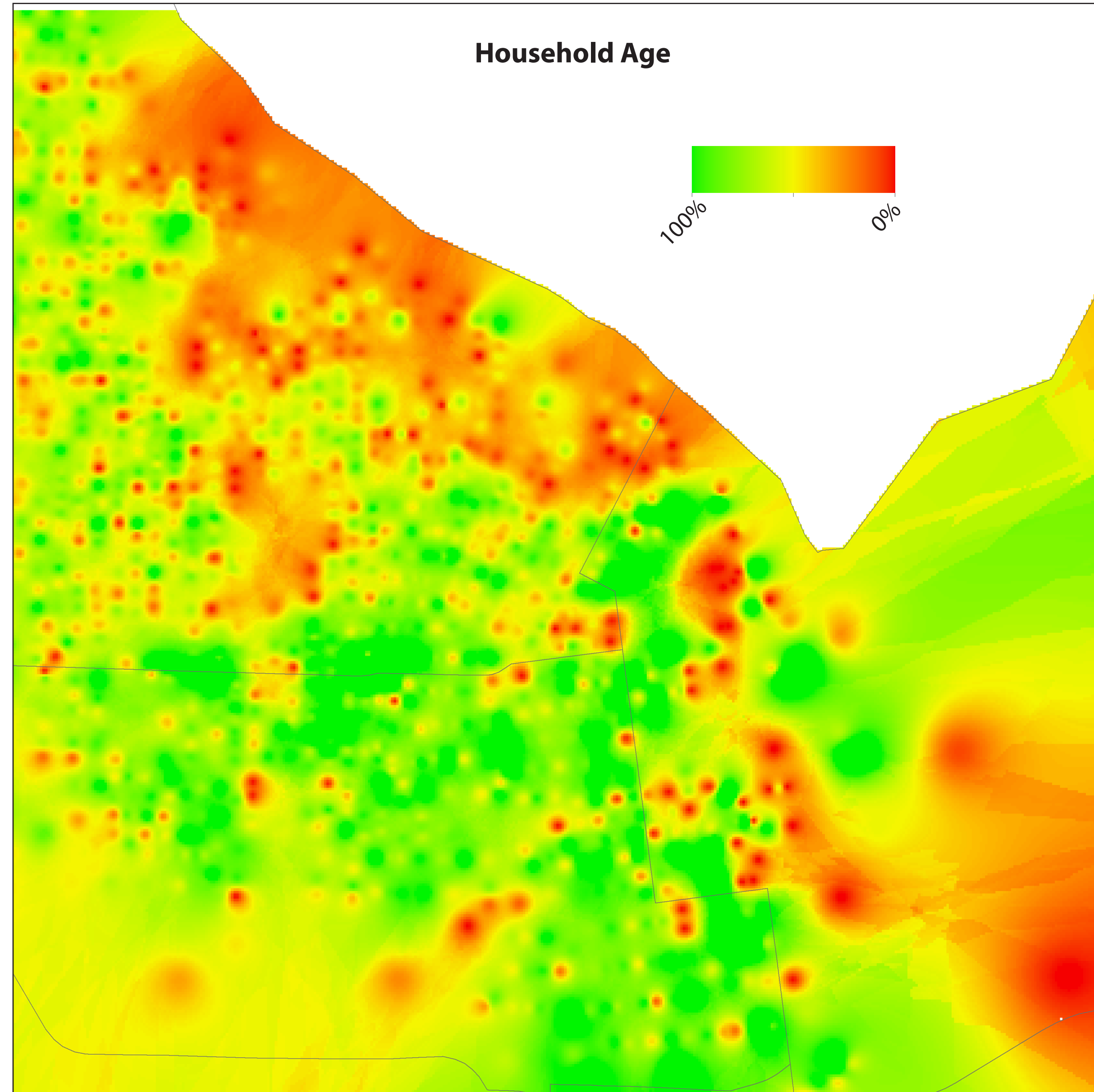
his popular ideas surrounding something he calls the Creative Class. The Creative Class is made up of professionals with small households and occupations that offer them excess income. They partake in and are attracted by what Florida calls Street Level Culture. Street Level Culture consists of indoor/outdoor eateries, music, carousing, and drinking. Tacoma has bought into what Florida has to say and has invited him to visit and

evaluate the city several times. This study serves to explore how Tacoma's existing assets fit in with Florida's idea of Street Level Culture, specifically in regards to micro-brewery culture. Tacoma knows beer. Even the students and professors at University of Washington – Tacoma can take their lunch break to The Harmon and enjoy the moist air and smell of hot yeast.

Does the Creative Class exist in Tacoma? Does micro-brewery culture support Street Level Culture? This study helps answer these questions.



This raster displays the percentage of residential census blocks have small households. Bright green symbolizes that the households contain four or less people. Singles and couples are weighted equally, with a child reducing the weight by 25% and two children reducing the weight by 50%.



This raster displays the percentage of household that are within the age range of the Creative Class. Census data are not in age brackets that are perfectly conducive with Florida's theory. To remedy this problem, the age brackets of 15-24 and 25-34 were weighted 25% heavier than the age bracket of 35-44. As you can see, some parts of Tacoma are younger than others.

The objectives of this study were to: 1) decide whether or not the Creative Class had found its way into Tacoma and 2) evaluate the health of Tacoma's Street Level Culture.

The hypothesis was that the neighborhoods selected would provide a significant sample of the Creative Class and that micro-brewery culture would prove a vibrant and productive aspect of Street Level Culture.

Names of bars and their respective address were found through a variety of sources including the Yellow Pages and websites like Yelp, and by physically driving throughout the selected neighborhoods. The address, city, state, and ZIP codes were entered into an address locator in ArcGIS to geocode them as points. This turned the data table into a useable points shapefile. The data table and shapefile were continuously updated as the redundancies were discovered and data was collected.

Demographic data was compiled throughout the micro-brew data collection process. Median household income, household age, and household size data were collected from the Census Bureau. Land use parcel data was collected from WAGDA. In order to conduct the analysis needed, all of this data needed to be interpolated and reclassified. Median household income was interpolated with a mask within the three neighborhoods.

The results were reclassified with 5 classes in natural breaks and symbolized with a red to green color ramp. The household age data was broken up into four rasters. The data was interpolated three different times. Each raster was reclassified into 5 classes with natural breaks symbolized with a red to green ramp. Having this data separated into three rasters allows them to be weighted differently in the raster calculator depending on the age ranges that best define the Creative Class.

A similar method was used with household size data. Four separate rasters were created by interpolating the household size data four different times showing what percentage of the households on each household block contains one person, two people, three people, and four people. Each raster was reclassified with 5 classes and natural breaks and symbol-

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ized with a red to green color ramp. Each raster is weighted differently favoring single households with rasters losing weight as people were added to the households.

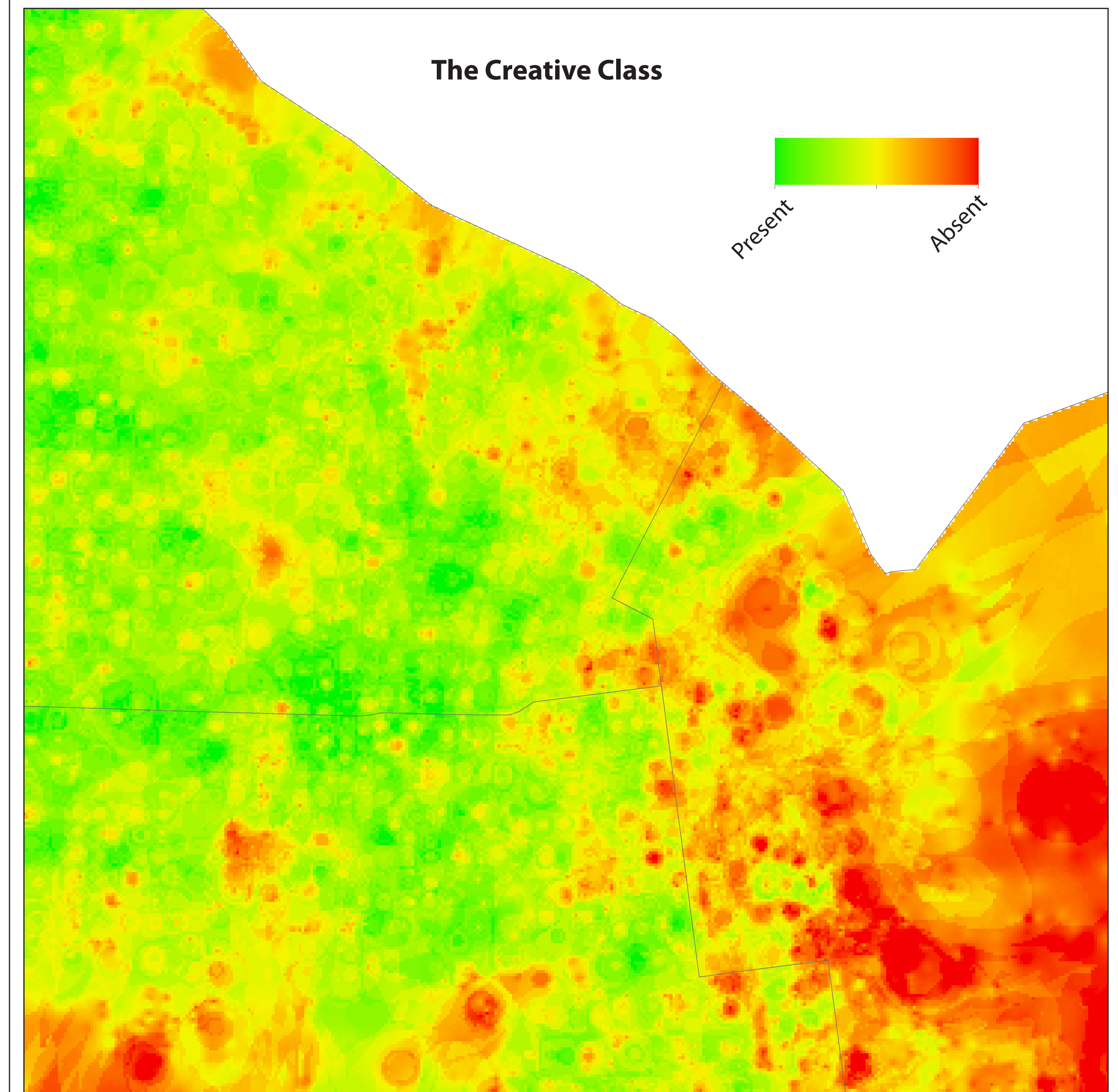
While the results were not conclusive, they were informative and encourage. This demographic data suggests that the Creative Class not only exists in these neighborhoods, but some of the areas outside the Creative Class are close to being a candidate for it. Seeing as there are corporation in Tacoma such as Davita, BCRA, and the University of Washington – Tacoma that potentially offer professions that lie within Florida's criteria, Tacoma possesses a strong asset in this demographic.

Furthermore, this study showed that micro-brewery culture is thriving in Tacoma. A severe majority of the bars explored used at least half of their tap for micro-brews. In fact, the average ratio of tap handles displaying a micro-brew was whopping 79.5%.

The Creative Class has found their way into Tacoma, and they are enjoying the Street Level Culture supported by a vibrant micro-brewery culture. Tacoma has an opportunity to capitalize on these strong assets by marketing them to FIRE industries and facilitate the growth of these micro-brews to increase the health of a light industry that contributes to street commerce and community building.

Richard Florida's literature on the Creative Class was fundamental to this study in defining what the Creative Class and Street Level Culture is. Literature on microbrewers and their role in the city and the economy by writers like J.E. Stauffer, Tom Wessons, Steven M. Schnell, and Joseph F. Reese were crucial in analysis building a validation. Finally, important urban studies literature by Robert Williams, Laam Hae, and David Grazian provide helpful explorations into how nightlife culture affects the city.

Special thanks to Dr. Matthew Kelley for guidance, education, and encouragement in this endeavor. Also, honest input from my classmates was integral in this study. Without peer feedback, the quality of the results would have been greatly diminished. Data courtest of the Census Bureau and WAGDA.



This raster brings together all of the census data including income, household size, and household age to show where Florida's Creative Class may be present. Much of Tacoma is right on the cusp of being optimal for the Creative Class form a demographic stand point.